

Submitter: Nicole Machen

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2979

Dear Co-Chair Helm, Co-Chair Owens, and Members of the House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water,

My name is Nicole, and I am a People's Farmers' Market community member in Portland. I am writing to strongly support HB 2979, and urge continued investment in Oregon's farmers markets, which serve as critical infrastructure for local economies, small farms, and food access programs.

The Farmers Market Climate Resilience Grant Fund and SNAP support grants have been lifelines, helping markets upgrade infrastructure, implement cooling and smoke mitigation strategies, and expand SNAP/Double Up Food Bucks programs. But demand far exceeds available funding—grant requests would have required more than double the resources OFMA has to distribute. Without renewed investment, farmers markets will struggle to continue serving their communities.

These programs impact me personally because:

-In extreme weather events such as heat waves or ice storms, the market is often the only place I can safely access to purchase food for my household. Given the impacts of climate change on weather, it is critical that the market is able to stay open so access can continue.

-Being able to buy local produce, and in many cases having the opportunity to meet the people growing my food, gives me confidence that I am consuming healthy food free from toxins. In large grocery retailers it's impossible to know where produce comes from and how it was grown, or even how fresh it is. At People's I know exactly what I'm purchasing & it reduces my anxiety and supports the local economy.

-Every person should have the right to be able to purchase affordable, healthy, good-quality food for themselves and their families. People's SNAP Double Up and Produce Match programs provide this ability to members of my community who would otherwise struggle to access affordable quality produce & food.

OFMA and Farmers Market Fund can leverage state funds to match federal funding, strengthening our farmers markets and local food systems. We cannot afford to fall behind. Please support HB 2979 to keep our markets strong, our farmers supported, and our communities fed.

Thank you,  
Nicole